

CLAIMS

1. A method of manufacturing a former for a mould plate for chocolate products including the steps of:
 - assembling a former plate, having a planar surface bounded by
 - 5 a border corresponding to the external dimensions of the mould plate;
 - producing a plurality of former shapes, corresponding to the recesses to be formed in the mould plate;
 - locating the former shapes in a template operable to locate the former shapes on the former plate;
- 10 applying adhesive to the former shapes; and
locating the former shapes on the former plate, using the template, to fix the former shapes to the former plate.
2. A method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein:
 - the template has holes, operable to receive at least a portion of
- 15 the former shapes, the holes being aligned with engraved or otherwise formed images on a graphics plate to which the mould plate is to be associated.
3. A method as claimed in Claim 2 wherein:
 - the images on the graphics plate are formed by a laser
- 20 engraver and are located thereon at spacings determined by a template layout programmed in computer software which controls the laser engraver.
4. A manufacturing mould plate for chocolate products including the steps of:

mixing a silicone rubber compound with a hardener to form a solution;

applying a vacuum to the solution to remove at least the majority of the air bubbles in the solution;

5 pouring the solution into a mould former and allowing the solution to settle;

 applying a clamping pressure to the mould assembly and allowing the silicone rubber to at least initially cure; and

 allowing the rubber to post cure before use.

10 5. A method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein:

 the solution is thoroughly mixed; and

 a coloured hardener is used to see when mixing is complete.

6. A method as claimed in Claim 4 or Claim 5 wherein:

 the mould former is manufactured by the method of any one of

15 Claims 1 to 3.

7. A method as claimed in Claim 4, wherein:

 when the solution is poured into the mould former, filtered dry air is blown onto the surface of the solution to remove air bubbles on the surface and agitate and settle the solution around the shapes in the mould former.

20 8. A method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein:

 a flexible divider is applied to the top surface of the former and rolled with a roller to work any air pockets out of the solution and cause

excess solution to be excluded from the former.

9. A method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein:

preferably, the initial curing is for 24 hours.

10. A method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein:

5 the edges of the mould plate are trimmed to remove any excess rubber.

11. A method as claimed in Claim 4 wherein:

the post curing may be at room temperature for 7-10 days, or in a curing oven, at 200°C for approximately 2 hours.

10 12. A method of manufacturing chocolates with a thin design of at least one other colour thereon, the method including the steps of:

engraving a plurality of images, corresponding to the design, on a graphics plate at preselected locations;

producing a mould plate former by the method of Claim 1;

15 producing a rubber mould plate using the mould plate former by the method of Claim 4;

applying chocolate of at least a first colour to the graphics plate to fill the engraved image thereon, to form the design, and removing any excess chocolate;

20 locating the mould plate on the graphics plate with the recesses in the mould plate in register with the designs of the at least first colour chocolate;

filling the recesses with another colour chocolate;

allowing the chocolate to set; and
removing the final chocolates from the mould plate.

13. Chocolates with a thin design thereon made by the method of
Claim 12.